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Divorce: A Study in Social Causation. Studies in History, Economics and Public Law, vol. xxxv, No. 3. By JAMES P. LICHTENBERGER. (New York: Columbia University: Longmans, Green and Company. 1909. Pp. 230.)

This monograph is a sane, courageous and thoroughly scientific study of the hardest and least understood problem of modern civilization. It is a signal proof of the leadership which the trained sociologist taking in the great constructive work of social and moral progress. For centuries earnest men have been searching for the ethical meaning of increasing divorce. Alike the statesman, the law-maker, and the moralist have failed to discover it. Theology and ecclesiastical tradition have but served to befog the issue. Apparently the sociologist is winning more success; for decidedly the phenomenon of increasing divorce is the result of social causation.

Accordingly Dr. Lichtenberger approaches his task as a sociologist whose sole interest is to reach the truth through an inductive examination of the facts. To him marriage and divorce are simply social institutions which have arisen in human experience under pressure of social forces for the satisfaction of human needs. He belongs to that "smaller, but rapidly increasing number" of persons who are seeking to determine whether the phenomenon of a rapidly accelerating divorce rate "may not be the result of environmental changes;" who "assert that in the readjustment of society to the new basis of our modern civilization" mal-adjustments may occur "which tend to disrupt the home;" who believe it "possible that the increasing divorce rate is the result of transition due to progress." He has nothing common with the religious dogmatists and alarmists who "regard the divorce movement as an integral part of a general trend of social degeneration which threatens the family, along with other social institutions."

In the first chapter the author seeks to disclose the nature and scope of his subject. It is his purpose to make an intensive study "of the facts exhibited in continental United States for a period of forty years, 1867-1906, for which the data are now accessible" in the two great government reports. The origin of divorce in primitive society is considered in the second chapter. An historical foundation is here laid in a brief and clear presentation of the salient facts disclosed by recent research regarding early matrimonial institutions. Touching the future of the family the chapter concludes with these words:

"With the gradual emancipation of women and the attainment of greater equality, the right of women to divorce, on the same footing as men, must be conceded. As various coercive tendencies are removed and marriage becomes a matter of choice, equally free divorce will necessarily result. It thus appears that modern developments are bringing us the completion of the circle. As in the primitive marriage, the individual will remain free to enter or to leave the marriage state, but he will be guided in his choices by higher considerations, and because of other influences, the union will be of much more enduring character, and will tend to become permanent."

The third chapter presents the essential provisions of the code of Hammurabi, the laws of Manu, the laws of Rome, and other ancient legal systems, so far as they deal with marriage and divorce. This is followed by an excellent account of divorce during the Christian centuries. The origin and consequences of the sacramental dogma are traced; and the influence of Martin Luther on the rise of civil marriage and its counterpart, civil divorce, is accented. The "principle involved in the civil contrast theory was destined to work out its necessary results. With the general recognition of the civil right throughout the civilized world, the sphere of secular legislation has been extended over the entire province of divorce; and ecclesiastical influence has diminished.

A rather full chapter is devoted to the American statistics of divorce; and another to American civil legislation. Dr. Lichtenberger is not inclined to lay much stress on the influence of legislation as either checking or increasing the divorce rate. While both our marriage and our divorce laws have gradually become more stringent, the divorce rate has gained a threefold velocity during the forty years since 1870. Though not accepting the popular view that very many persons obtain divorce in order to rewed, he contends that there is "one element in the problem which is frequently overlooked" in scientific discussion. He says:

"While it may be that the numbers of those who wish to break their marriage ties, in order to assume new ones, is statistically a negligible quantity, although from observation we know there are such cases, it is certainly true that there are not a few husbands and wives who have separated and who have lived apart, perhaps for years, and who have not deemed it expedient or necessary to go to the trouble of obtaining a divorce, who find at length that new attachments have been formed and who proceed to procure legal separation in order to legitimate their new relationships. . . . As a matter of fact, only

12.7 per cent of the divorces granted in the period of 1887-1906, in which the length of time between separation and divorce was known, were obtained in less than a year after separation, while 72.2 per cent ranged between one and five years."

The eighth chapter gives us a useful summary of American ecclesiastical legislation regarding divorce; and such legislation falls wholly within the period covered by this monograph. The efforts of the churches have been directed almost wholly to effects rather than to causes; and therefore in the main their action is a monument of wasted energy.

The last five chapters (pp. 142-225) are devoted to a study of the social causes of divorce. This part is of course the crowning purpose of the whole investigation; and in it Dr. Lichtenberger has rendered to society an important service. He seeks the real causes of the acceleration of the divorce rate in changing social conditions, in the clash of old and lower ideals with new and higher ideals of the marriage relation during a transition phase of social progress. Bad marriage laws and sociologically bad marriages are and always have been a proximate cause of divorce; but the fundamental causes of the "threefold velocity" of the divorce rate in our country, and of the increase in the rate elsewhere, "is the pressure due to changes in the social environment; "which pressure "is operating to render sociologically bad marriages unendurable, whereas under former conditions they were not discovered to be bad, and even to make it more difficult for sociologically good marriages to survive."

Accordingly Dr. Lichtenberger examines the "problem of adjustment to environment," first considering the "stress of modern economic life,"—its "pressure upon the home," the "passing of the economic function of the family," and the "economic emancipation of women." The significance of the freer granting of divorce for women is rightly accentuated:

"The influence of the new economic status of woman upon the divorce rate is readily perceived. Marriage is no longer the only vocation open to her and for which she is equalified. She is not forced into marriage as her only means of support, and later marriages and lower birth-rates reveal the influence of this fact. If marriage is a failure, she does not face the alternative of endurance or starvation." Wives more often than husbands are seeking relief from marital ills in the divorce court. "Sixty-six per cent of all divorces in the United States are now granted on the petition of the wife."

In harmony with his discussion of the economic forces working for

more liberal divorce, is Dr. Lichtenberger's luminous chapters on the many-sided "struggle for social liberation" and on "ethical and religious readjustment." Beyond reasonable question, the divorce movement is an incident in the mighty process of spiritual liberation which has been going on ever since the Reformation. The age of sentiment, dogma, and appeal to traditional authority is passing. There have arisen a higher ideal of domestic happiness and "new basis of sexual morality."

This monograph is a worthy product of the American sociological laboratory; and it will help everyone who is earnestly striving to advance the just solution of the hard problems of modern social ethics.

GEORGE ELLIOTT HOWARD.

Joseph Cowen's Speeches on the Near Eastern Question: Foreign and Imperial Affairs: and on the British Empire. Revised by His Daughter. (London: Longmans, Green and Company. Pp. 249.)

The late Joseph Cowen was an English newspaper owner and publicist who was one of the members of parliament from Newcastle, where his daily journal, the *Chronicle*, was published, from 1873 to 1885. He long ranked as an orator; and in this capacity was sometimes classed along with John Bright. He was a speaker who took extraordinary pains with every public utterance he made; for it was his practice to dictate his speeches to a shorthand reporter; have them put in type in his newspaper office; and then work them over until he regarded them as perfect and ready for delivery. He was one of the last of this school of English orators, one of the last English publicists who prized their reputations as orators, and were always zealous to live up to these reputations. It is for this reason perhaps more than for the present day value of the views expressed that this collection of speeches by Mr. Cowen will be turned to by American students of English political life in the twenty-one years that lie between 1876 and 1897. Mr. Cowen's speeches lack the moral force and ethical note of Bright's platform utterances; but they are otherwise typical of the best house of commons and platform oratory in the last twenty-five years of the late queen's reign. The earlier speeches of Mr. Cowen were collected, edited, and published by Major Jones, of Cardiff, in 1885. Those in what may be regarded as the concluding volume begin with an address at Blaydon-on-Tyne in 1876, on